

UNCLAS KUWAIT 000446

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PTER PREL KU TERRORISM

SUBJECT: KUWAIT RESPONDS TO JANUARY 31 SHOOTOUT: GOK WILL
NOT COMPROMISE ON TERROR

REF: A. KUWAIT 417

B. KUWAIT 406

C. KUWAIT 339

D. KUWAIT 264

E. KUWAIT 244

F. KUWAIT 174

¶1. Summary: Kuwaiti officials vowed to use all available resources to hunt down militants after security forces engaged in a nine-hour confrontation with Islamic radicals on January 31 that left 5 militants, 1 civilian and 1 police officer dead, 4 police officers and 3 militants wounded, and led to the capture of the group's spiritual leader, Amer Khlaif Al-Enezi. End Summary.

¶2. Interior Minister Shaykh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al-Sabah told local reporters January 31 that Kuwait was exerting maximum effort to hunt down all suspects involved in the string of shootouts between security forces and radical Islamic militants. Meeting with the editors of local dailies the same day, Acting Minister of Information Faisal Al-Hajji likened the current security situation to "cancer" and said the government was "determined to confront and uproot this phenomenon," according to Arabic daily Al-Watan. The Prime Minister was quoted ordering all government ministries to confront extremism in all its forms.

¶3. National Assembly Speaker Jassem Al-Khorafi, who is presiding over a February 1 special session of that body to discuss security in the country, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) January 31 that the Assembly was united in support of government efforts to combat extremism. He further said "Kuwaitis all reject such acts and tendencies."

¶4. During its weekly Sunday meeting on January 30, the Council of Ministers charged all government authorities to take whatever measures necessary to maintain public safety. The Ministry of Awqaf responded by issuing orders to its media department to develop a media campaign to combat extremism.

¶5. Other prominent Kuwaitis have voiced their solidarity with the government. At a January 31 seminar hosted by the Kuwait Graduates Society and entitled "Extremism and Terrorism... Why?," non-profit organizations expressed their condemnation of the current violence and terrorism in general. The head of the Women's Cultural Society, Shaikha Al-Nisf, said Kuwait should take a comprehensive approach to combating terror and countering extremist thought and behavior. Graduates Society President Saud Al-Enezi called for a review of Kuwaiti school curricula as an integral part of any such strategy. A member of the Kuwait Journalists Association, Ayed Al-Manna, agreed, and noted that the ultimate goal of the terrorists was the deprivation of freedom. He said terrorists would fail here just as they had in Algeria and are doing in Saudi Arabia.

¶6. The incident was the fourth (refs A-F) between Kuwaiti security forces and suspected terrorists in the month of January, during which the GOK conducted a series of operations aimed at rounding up possible terrorists and seizing illegal weapons.

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